

Message Text

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ORIGIN MBFR-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 USIE-00 SS-15 NSC-10 DODE-00

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NEA-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 TRSE-00

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S/S-O MR. MILLER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS PRIORITY

USNMR SHAPE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 184990

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: PRESS GUIDANCE

REF: (A) STATE 181638; (B) STATE 182240

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1. TOTH LA TIMES STORY HAS PRECIPITATED FOLLOW-UP STORIES

BY DREW MIDDLETON IN NEW YORK TIMES ON SEPTEMBER 16 AND
MICHAEL GETLER IN WASHINGTON POST ON SEPTEMBER 17.

2. GUIDANCE TO REFRAIN FROM COMMENT STILL APPLIES. IN
THE EVENT OF POSSIBLE QUESTIONS, POSTS SHOULD REPLY ALONG
THESE LINES: "THIS TYPE OF QUESTION DEALS WITH THE
GENERAL ISSUE OF POSSIBLE APPROACHES WHICH THE ALLIES MIGHT
TAKE IN THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WHICH BEGIN ON OCTOBER 30.
THE WESTERN NEGOTIATING POSITION FOR MBFR CONTINUES TO
BE THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION AMONG THE ALLIES. IT THUS
WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO MAKE ANY COMMENTS ON THIS
TOPIC."

3. FOR POST'S INFORMATION, TEXTS OF THE TWO ARTICLES
FOLLOW.

4. GETLER ARTICLE IN WASHINGTON POST ON SEPTEMBER 17
READS: BEGIN TEXT:

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAY THERE IS "A GOOD CHANCE" FOR
AN INITIAL U.S.-SOVIET AGREEMENT SOMETIME IN 1974 ON
MUTUAL TROOP CUTS IN EUROPE. THE FIRST STEP WOULD IN-
VOLVE WITHDRAWAL OF SOME 20,000 TO 30,000 U.S. SOLDIERS,
LINKED TO A "BALANCED" PULLBACK OF SOVIET FORCES.

IF SUCH CUTS RESULT FROM THE FIRST ROUND OF EAST-WEST
TROOP REDUCTION TALKS THAT OPEN IN VIENNA ON OCT. 30,
THEN OFFICIALS HERE ESTIMATE THAT A SECOND ROUND OF
SIMILAR-SIZED REDUCTIONS SHOULD ALSO BE POSSIBLE.

BUT WHETHER THESE MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTION
TALKS WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO FAR MORE SUBSTANTIAL CUTS
IN THE ROUGHLY 313,000 U.S. SERVICEMEN NOW STATIONED IN
EUROPE IS A QUESTION THAT THESE OFFICIALS SAY MAY NOT
BE ANSWERED FOR FIVE YEARS OR MORE.

SENIOR U.S. DEFENSE PLANNERS ARGUE THAT WHILE SOME CUT-
BACKS ARE POSSIBLE, THERE IS A MINIMUM LEVEL OF AMERICAN
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MILITARY PRESENCE IN WESTERN EUROPE THAT NEEDS TO BE
MAINTAINED FOR AS MANY YEARS AS IT TAKES TO ACHIEVE A
FAR GREATER RELAXATION OF OVERALL U.S.-SOVIET TENSIONS
THAN NOW EXISTS. THAT LEVEL WOULD STILL BE QUITE
LARGE.

THUS, THESE OFFICIALS LINK THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS OF THE
MBFR TALKS, IN TERMS OF ANY TRULY SIZABLE U.S. TROOP

WITHDRAWAL, TO THE BROADER WEB OF U.S.-RUSSIAN RELATIONS. THESE INCLUDE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS PLUS THE WILLINGNESS OF THE RUSSIANS TO TONE DOWN THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE IN A MAJOR FASHION AT FORTHCOMING ROUNDS OF THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IS EXPECTED TO NAME A HIGH-LEVEL U.S. DELEGATION TO THE VIENNA TROOP REDUCTION TALKS SHORTLY.

ONE OF THE TOP OFFICIALS ON THAT DELEGATION IS EXPECTED TO BE BRUCE C. CLARKE, CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC RESEARCH AT THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. CLARKE IS EXPECTED TO REPRESENT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DR. JAMES R. SCHLESINGER - THE FORMER HEAD OF CIA - AT THE TALKS.

THE ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO ANXIOUS TO HEAD OFF RISING CONGRESSIONAL DEMANDS FOR A SIZABLE U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL TO HELP EASE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN THIS COUNTRY.

THE DIRECT COST OF MAINTAINING U.S. TROOPS IN EUROPE IS ABOUT \$4 BILLION ANNUALLY, WITH A NET BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DRAIN ESTIMATED AT ROUGHLY \$1.5 BILLION A YEAR. THE FIGURES ARE EVEN HIGHER WHEN THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH MORE THAN 225,000 MILITARY DEPENDENTS ARE FACTORED IN.

DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER, HOWEVER, HAS INDICATED HE EXPECTS STILL HIGHER CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE EUROPEANS TO HELP OFFSET THE COSTS. AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THAT THE PROSPECT FOR SOME CUTBACKS, PLUS AN EFFORT TO IMPRESS MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROADERS IN CONGRESS WITH THE OVERALL IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN EUROPE TO OTHER TRADE NEGOTIATIONS, WILL BE ABLE TO

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FORESTALL DEMANDS FOR BIGGER UNILATERAL CUTBACKS OF UP TO 50 PER CENT OF THE U.S. FORCE.

THE U.S. PLAN FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF TALKS, WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NATO ALLIES, FOCUSES ON THE 198,000 U.S. TROOPS STATIONED ALONG THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN FRONT IN WEST GERMANY.

THOSE TROOPS CONSIST VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE U.S. GROUND COMBAT CAPABILITY IN EUROPE. THEY INCLUDE 4 1/3 DIVISIONS, TWO ARMORED REGIMENTS AND THE BERLIN BRIGADE.

U.S. OFFICIALS SAY THE INITIAL PROPOSED CUTS WOULD INVOLVE U.S. AND SOVIET GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWALS FROM THE CRITICAL CENTRAL REGION, RATHER THAN TROOPS FROM OTHER

NATO COUNTRIES AND THE WARSAW PACT.

THE U.S. WILL PRESS FOR A SOVIET WITHDRAWAL OF APPROXIMATELY TWICE THE U.S. PULLBACK, BECAUSE OF THE LARGER SIZE OF THE SOVIET FORCES AND THE FACT THAT U.S. TROOPS WOULD BE PULLED BACK ACROSS THE OCEAN.

WHETHER THE SOVIETS WOULD AGREE TO A LARGER NUMERICAL WITHDRAWAL IS NOT YET KNOWN, THOUGH OFFICIALS SAY THERE HAS BEEN ENOUGH DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION AT PREVIOUS SUMMIT MEETINGS AND THROUGH OTHER CONTACTS TO ASSURE AT LEAST "THAT BOTH COUNTRIES ARE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED."

OFFICIALS SAY WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE FIRST ROUND IS PURELY SPECULATIVE AT THIS POINT, SINCE THERE IS NO REAL CONFIDENCE CONCERNING THE SPECIFIC SOVIET POSITION.

BEYOND THE INITIAL CUTS, SOME DEFENSE PLANNERS ESTIMATE THAT FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT INVOLVE ANOTHER 20,000-TO-30,000-MAN U.S. REDUCTION, WITH THE REMAINING CENTRAL FRONT GROUND FORCES ORGANIZED INTO A 150,000-MAN ARMY CORPS OF PERHAPS THREE DIVISIONS, PLUS SUPPORT AND HEADQUARTERS.

SOME OFFICIALS BELIEVE THE DEBATE IN THIS COUNTRY OVER
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EUROPEAN TROOP LEVELS HAS BECOME TOO INVOLVED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ARGUMENT WITH MAINTAINING OR CUTTING SPECIFIC LEVELS OF TROOPS. THESE OFFICIALS FEEL THAT A CORPS, FOR EXAMPLE, IS A COHESIVE MILITARY UNIT THAT REPRESENTS A SMALLER BUT STILL VERY MEANINGFUL DEFENSE CAPABILITY. IT IS THIS LEVEL OF FORCES TH
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